

## **Historic, Archive Document**

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F O R T U N E S   W A S H E D   A W A Y

"IOWA PLANS HER FUTURE"

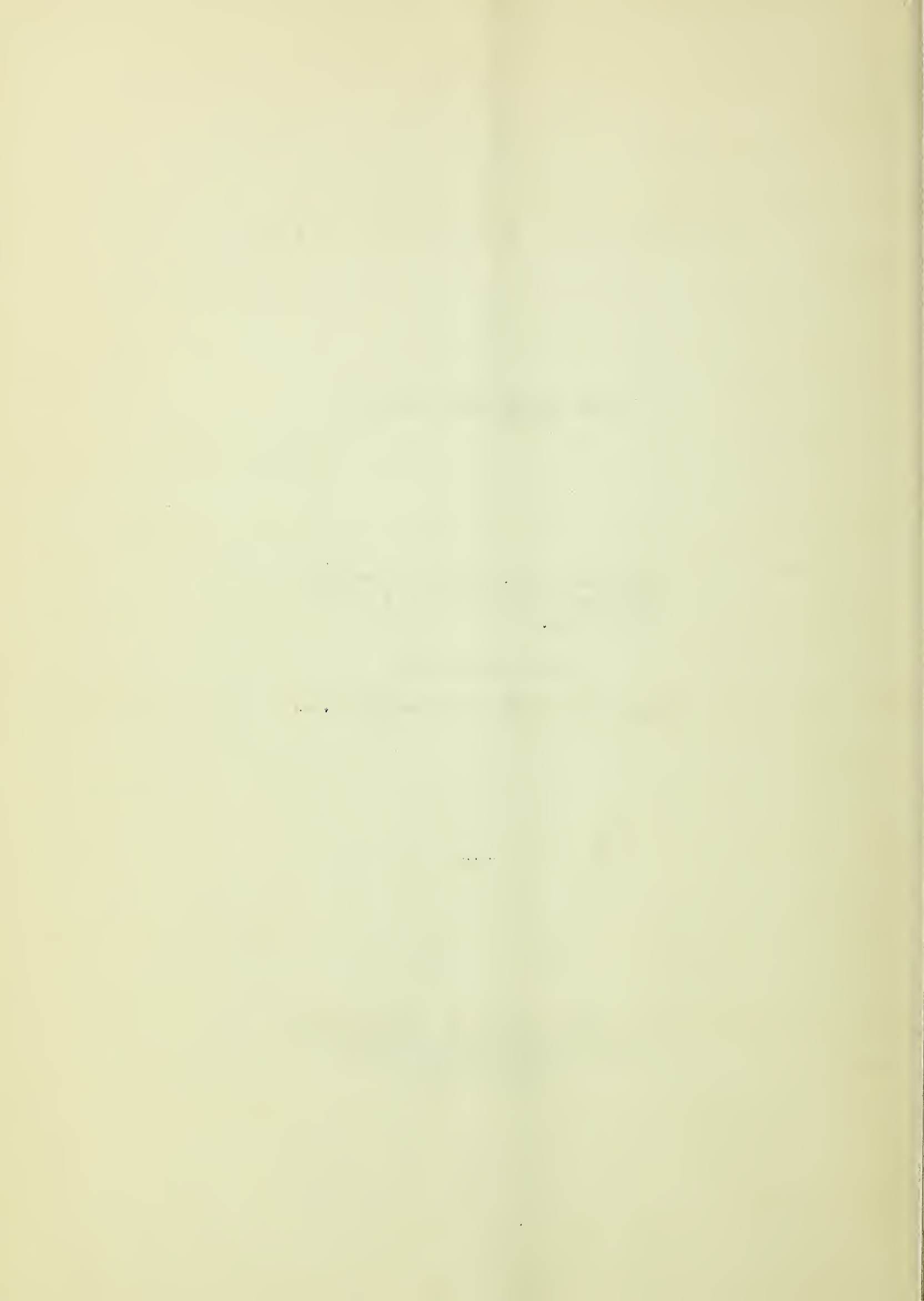
Broadcast No. 48 in a series  
of discussions of soil con-  
servation.

WLW, Cincinnati

March 25, 1939 6:45-7:00 p.m.

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE  
Dayton, Ohio



SOUND: Thunder and rain...

ALLISON

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS (up and fading into)  
IOWA CORN SONG (in rollicking fashion).

ALLISON

Iowa! Famed as the tall corn state, famed as one of the richest agricultural areas in all this world, and justly so--for there's mighty little poor land in Iowa. And Iowa is guarding her natural resources, is leading the nation in conservation planning. Conservation of surface waters, of topsoil, of woodlands, of wildlife--development of recreational facilities, development of scenic beauties--all these are comprehended in Iowa's conservation plan. On September 28, 1931, Iowa's State Board of Conservation held an historic meeting...

SOUND: Bustle of voices, talking and laughing, interrupted by sound of gavel striking table.

SAUNDERS

All right, people, let's come to order here. We've work to do.

SOUND: Bustle of talk fades out.

SAUNDERS

Let's see, all of us here except Mrs. Laffer. Just the same, I'll call the roll for the sake of the record.

SOUND: As he calls names, other voices respond.

SAUNDERS

Mrs. Henry Frankel...Mrs. R. H. Volland...J. G. Wyth...and Mrs. C. C. Laffer is absent.

MRS. FRANKEL

She just couldn't make it, Mr. Saunders.



SAUNDERS

I know, I know. She'd have been here if that had been possible... Well, the principal item of business for today has to do with the proposal to make a general survey of the state for the purpose of planning a long-time conservation program. We might as well take that item up first, if you've no objection...

CHORUS OF APPROVAL: Not at all... Good idea...

SAUNDERS (laughing)

All right... As you all know, the 44th General Assembly has by act instructed the state board of conservation and the fish and game commission to have the general survey made... Last spring, we appointed a sub-committee to meet with a committee from the fish and game commission--a committee to decide how we're to go about making the survey, and so on. That committee's ready to report today...

MR. WYTH

Let's have it...

SAUNDERS

Will you read the report, Mrs. Frankel?

MRS. FRANKEL (reading)

The committee recommends that Jacob L. Crane, Jr., of Chicago, be appointed as special consultant to the board and the fish and game commission...He should make the state-wide survey provided for by the 44th General Assembly...He'll act as director of the survey--subject-matter specialists, the best available, will assist him..

WYTH

That survey's going to be a big job, I can tell you...



MRS. FRANKEL

It certainly is.

SAUNDERS

After careful investigation, we are convinced that Mr. Crane is the man for the job...

WYTH

Well, then, for the sake of the record I move we accept the committee's recommendation--appoint Mr. Crane to take charge of the survey.

CHORUS OF APPROVAL: Sure...he's the man...etc.

ORGAN: IOWA CORN SONG.

ALLISON

Never before in America had such an array of specialized talent set to work on a coordinated conservation planning project. Under Crane's general supervision were wildlife specialists, foresters, biologists, geologists, hydrologists, fisheries specialists, landscape architects...the best men available. Over the state the survey spread, as specialists traveled thousands of miles along Iowa roads. Hundreds of field expeditions were made. Vast files of data and recommendations were built up. And from this wealth of material was shaped Iowa's now-famous 25-year conservation plan. And newspaper headlines flashed across the nation...

VOICE (reading)

Surveyors reveal train carrying all of soil washed from Iowa farms would circle globe 240 times...

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE.

SECOND VOICE (reading)

Quail survey may result in open season in southern Iowa.



ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE.

THIRD VOICE (reading)

25-year planners recommend construction of 30 artificial lakes in Iowa.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ALLISON

That last headline caught the eye of a farmer near Bunch, Iowa, in the southern part of the state. In 1932, Walker Smith and his brother, Johnny...

SOUND: Heavy rain falling on roof...

WALKER

Hey, Johnny,...just look at it come down. This is a soaker, all right.

JOHNNY

It's practically a lake out there.

WALKER

Yeah. Say! That's just what I've been thinking about. Read an item in the paper this morning...

JOHNNY

What on earth are you talking about?

WALKER (laughing)

I suppose I do sound a little nutty. But here's the dope.

JOHNNY

I'm listening.

WALKER

I read in the paper this morning about how the fellows making that 25-year plan are recommending a lot of artificial lakes. Eventually, we may have a lake every 40 miles all the way across this part of the state.



JOHNNY

Oho! I'm beginning to get the idea...

WALKER

And right here in this part of Davis County is the best site I know for an artificial lake. Put a dam across Puy Dee Creek just northwest of us, and you'd flood that flat to the west. Some of it's our land. Some of it belongs to Bill Steckel. I think I'll see...  
(fade out).

SOUND: Rain fades out.

SOUND: Spoon stirring dough in a pan.

WALKER (fade in)

Turning housewife today, Johnny? Um...that cornbread looks good.

JOHNNY

Now, you keep your fingers out of this.

WALKER

Okay, okay...well, I'm going to Bloomfield.

JOHNNY

To Bloomfield? You can't get out of here in a car, the way the roads are. It's a sea of mud out there.

WALKER

I can walk, can't I? I want to talk this lake over with Bill. You know, the more I think about it, the more excited I get.

JOHNNY

Looks that way. I'm sure glad you don't get these ideas often.

WALKER

You'll see. You'll be as excited about it as I am, by and by. Well, so long. Don't know just when I'll be back. (fade)

JOHNNY (to himself)

Somebody's going crazy around here.



ORGAN: IOWA CORN SONG, fading out as...

SOUND: Door opens. Man running adding machine, pausing as...

STECKEL

Well, well, Smith. Glad to see you...but you look a little muddy.

WALKER

Yeah, I've been wading mud for 13 miles.

STECKEL

You mean...you walked in?

WALKER

Yeah. Maybe I'm crazy, Bill, but I have an idea I want to talk over with you. Couldn't do much around the farm today, so I decided to come on in...

STECKEL

Well, come on back into the office. I can add these figures later.

WALKER

Thanks.

SOUND: Door closes, chairs scrape.

STECKEL

Now, what's this idea that's caused you to wade 13 miles of mud?

It must be something....

WALKER

You can be the judge of that, Bill.... You read in the paper about the proposal to build artificial lakes across southern Iowa...

STECKEL

Sure.



WALKER

Well, for a long time I've thought that about the best site for a lake in the whole state is right here at home--in Davis County. Part of that lake would be on my land, part of it on yours, the way I have it figured... Here, I've made a sketch of it--to see what the thing looked like on paper...

SOUND: Paper rustles as sketch is unrolled...

WALKER

Now, if a dam is built across Puy Dee Creek right here, it'll back up water all over this area. Over 250 to 300 acres, I think. It'll be from 10 to 30 feet deep. Wooded hills all around it...

STECKEL

Be closer to 300 acres, I think...

WALKER

Maybe so. There'd be lots of coves--swell fishing places. Lots of shore line. It's an ideal location. I don't know of a better site in the state...

STECKEL

It'd take a good-sized dam...

WALKER

Sure. But the site is so ideal that the cost of developing the lake should be pretty low...

STECKEL (slowly)

Should be, yes...

WALKER

It'd mean a lot to this community. Fishing, boating, swimming. Lots of visitors...



STECKEL

Um....well, Walker, maybe you do have something here. Wait a minute while I look up that item in the paper...see what these conservation fellows are talking about.

ORGAN: IOWA CORN SONG.

ALLISON

Before long, Steckel was sold on Walker's idea. The two men saw Dr. W. C. Boone of Ottumwa, long a leader in the conservation movement. Dr. Boone approved the plan, placed the matter before the state Fish and Game Commission. Work was begun on Lake Wapello. A CCC camp did reforestation and erosion control work in the watershed draining into the lake. In the spring of 1933, the first fish were placed in the lake, and three years later, once more newspapers flashed...

FIRST VOICE (reading)

Lake Wapello opened for fishing today!

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE.

SECOND VOICE (reading)

Lake stocked with more than 200,000 game and forage fish!

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE.

THIRD VOICE (reading)

Fourteen thousand visitors expected!

ORGAN: UP and swing into IOWA CORN SONG.



ALLISON

And proudest of all those on hand that day was Walker Smith, farmer, who saw his dream come true. And while Lake Wapello was being developed, advances were being made on all fronts mapped by the 25-year plan--wildlife conservation, reforestation, soil conservation. Iowa has planned ahead!

ORGAN: IOWA CORN SONG, up and out.

ALLISON

And now, once more we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and here is Ewing Jones.

JONES

Thank you, Paul Allison. This is National Wildlife Week, and all over the country sportsmen and conservationists are making their own plans for the future. A number of banquets are being held today--banquets like that being held at Zanesville, Ohio. And men like Ding Darling and Aldo Leopold are very much in demand. But getting back to Iowa's 25-year plan, Lake Wapello is only one of the lakes developed in that state. M. L. Hutton, of Iowa's Conservation Commission, told Ken Davis of the Soil Conservation Service that during the last 6 years, 18 state-owned lakes, covering a total of 1,670 acres, have been developed, in addition to a number of city reservoirs.

ALLISON

Sounds as though there's more good fishing in Iowa than most people think there is.



JONES

But that's just part of the vast conservation program. The Soil Conservation Service and Iowa State College are working with cooperating farmers in making a frontal attack on the soil erosion problem.

ALLISON

That ties right in with lake and stream development, too. The erosion control work does, I mean.

JONES

Hutton says that a survey indicates that some 30 lakes should be dredged, at least in part, to remove silt...

ALLISON

Good soil that should have been kept on the farms.

JONES

Right. Hutton said that actual soundings and borings were taken on 18 of Iowa's lakes, and it was found that the average depth of water was only  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet, while the average depth of silt was  $11\frac{1}{2}$  feet.

ALLISON

That's a lot of soil to throw away.

JONES

You're telling me. It fills 68 percent of the original volume of those lakes. But steps are being taken to keep that sort of thing from happening to Lake Wapello. Farmers in the watershed draining into the lake are slowly but surely becoming conservation-minded. They're adopting practices that'll keep topsoil at home.

ALLISON

That's really an impressive step.



JONES

More impressive to me than all the remarkable physical progress that Iowa has made under her conservation plan, is the fact that the plan was made in the first place. Here we see a great state facing a problem that so many of us have shirked--planning its course instead of drifting to almost inevitable physical disaster. That plan is an expression of practical democracy. It gives all of us something to shoot at.

SOUND: Thunder and rain...

ALLISON

This story was presented through the cooperation of the Dayton, Ohio, and the Des Moines, Iowa, regional offices of the Soil Conservation Service. Next week, "Community Cooperation in the Blacklands of Texas." Fortunes Washed Away is a studio presentation of the agriculture department of the Nation's Station.

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